



PARTNERS IN CRIME PREVENTION

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BURGLARY PREVENTION—SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS

Over the past few years more and more homeowners have been installing surveillance cameras around their homes. Often this is in reaction to being victimized by a car prowl, car theft, or a burglary.

A surveillance system can be an effective deterrent to a car prowler or burglar. They can also help to catch a suspect with their video should you have been victimized.

A good surveillance system includes the following:

- Cameras. Many systems come with several cameras that you can put around your house.
- DVR. This is needed to store the video for you to look at after a suspicious incident or if you have been victimized.
- Monitor, somewhat optional, but needed if you want to see the video. Some systems will let you look at the video with your computer, or remotely from any location with internet access, or even

with your smart phone.

- Power supply.
- Surge protector. To protect the system from a power surge.

The most straightforward and simplest function of a camera system is to act as a deterrent to crime. Like with signs announcing that you have an alarm system, a visible camera will make many potential burglars think that there is a high risk of being caught, causing them to look for another home to break into. Cameras do have a deterrent effect, especially with a motion light that can startle a prowler at night.

Sometimes people will install fake cameras as a deterrent and to save the cost of real cameras. Fake cameras have some deterrent value, but real cameras are better.

A good camera system that is properly installed can give you the opportunity to provide a usable image of a suspect should you be victimized in a burglary or car prowl. But to be suc-



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BURGLAR ALARMS- BE SURE TO SHOP AROUND

When you start looking for an alarm company get references from friends, family, insurance agent, and neighbors who have alarm systems. Contact five or more companies for bids.

When contacting the companies, ask if they are members of the National Burglar and Fire Alarm Association (www.alarm.org) and The Electronic Security Association of Washington (<http://waesa.org/>). Ask if they do pre-employment screening of their employees.

Check to see if the companies are licensed in the State of Washington. You can look them up at:

- The Department of Licensing- <https://fortress.wa.gov/dol/dolprod/bpdLicenseQuery/>
- The Department of Labor and Industries- <http://www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/Contractors/HireCon/>

BURGLARY PREVENTION- CAMERAS CONTINUED

Successful, you need to select the right system and install it for maximum effectiveness.

For a camera system to be useful for law enforcement agencies, it needs to provide pictures with good facial recognition. You want to avoid systems that have cloudy or fuzzy images. A good picture enables a deputy to recognize the person.

The face needs to be within 50 feet to have good facial recognition. The area that the camera covers should be well lit, not dark. Cameras should be HD low light cameras. Many will show a color image during daylight then switch to black and white at dark.

When shopping for a camera system, you will no doubt consider price. Home surveillance systems have become popular because their prices are relatively inexpensive compared to systems with similar capability in the past. Remember, if you buy a cheap system you will get what you pay for. With a little more money you can have a system that can give you a reasonable opportunity to identify people on your property.

Even with the best of camera systems, installation is important. Do not put your cameras too high up. Higher is often thought to be better so that the criminal cannot reach the camera to destroy it. But if the camera is at the peak of the garage, then it most likely will be too far for a good facial shot and can give you only a shot the of top of a head. Place the camera just out of reach of an average person at 12 feet or so.

Placement of your cameras around your house also depends on what you want to protect. Over garage and front doors are common places to have cameras, obviously because these are common points of entry for burglars and where vehicles are parked.

While camera systems are not perfect- crooks can cover their faces to prevent from being recognized- a good system can act as a deterrent and can give you a better chance to provide usable evidence in case you are victimized. As with insurance, hopefully you will not need to use it.

BURGLARY PREVENTION- ALARMS

People often think of a burglar alarm as another device to protect their home. A burglar alarm uses sensors in several part of the house, doors, window and motion sensors in strategic places, to detect intruders. It then sends a signal to a siren or to a monitoring facility.

Advantages. Advantages to having a burglar alarm are:

1. A sign outside of a house announcing that it is protected by a burglar alarm is usually sufficient to encourage potential burglars to move on to another house.
2. Burglar alarms give you added piece of mind that your home and loved ones are secure.
3. Most insurance companies will give you a discount on your homeowners coverage if you have an alarm.

Local vs. Monitored. When an alarm system detects an intruder, it announces the intruder either through a horn or siren (locally) and/or by signaling a central monitoring station (monitored).

A horn or siren will no doubt scare away an intruder but police won't be

notified unless someone happens to hear the alarm and calls 911.

With a monitored system, you pay a monthly fee for the monitoring service. When the service receives a signal that an intruder is in your house, they call your home phone number to verify that there is a problem. If they cannot determine that your home is secure they call the local 911 agency who dispatches the police.

Many local police have been recommending an alarm system with a horn that your neighbors can hear. This is simple to install. You only have the installation cost not a monthly monitoring fee. Also, it is more direct than a monitored system. If your neighbor hears the alarm they can look to see what is going on and can report to 911 what they are witnessing, giving assurance to 911 and police that the alarm has been triggered by a burglar.

How They Work. A basic household alarm system consists of a control panel, sensors, and a method to alert people of an intruder.

BURGLAR ALARM CONTRACTORS- WHAT TO ASK

- *Is the firm established, with a history of performance and service?*
- *Does the alarm company have insurance to cover the cost of any damage to your property caused by the company during installation?*
- *Are the company and installers properly licensed and bonded? Is anything sub-contracted (installation, service, monitoring)?*
- *Is the central monitoring station U/L Approved? Where is it located?*
- *Is the system equipped with a battery backup? Is the battery rechargeable?*
- *Does the company offer a written guarantee? What is guaranteed and for how long? Are parts and labor covered?*

BURGLARY PREVENTION- ALARMS CONTINUED

The control panel is the brains of your alarm system. The sensors are connected to it. If a sensor detects an intrusion, it signals the control panel which in turn sounds a horn or siren and/or dials the central monitoring station. At the control panel you turn the system on or off, often with a pass code. Be sure the control panel is located at a convenient place where you usually enter or leave your house.

The sensors can detect an intrusion in a variety of ways. For a basic system, your doors to the outside, such as front door, sliding glass door and door to the garage will have contact sensors. When the system is on, if the door opens, then the sensor sends a signal to the control panel.

Another sensor that you might have in a basic system would be a motion detector. Using either Ultrasonic waves or microwaves, a motion detector sends a signal to the control panel when a body is detected within the field of view of

the device. Pets can cause a false alarm if detected by a motion detector.

With the doors covered to your house, you might want additional sensors on your windows. Sometimes burglars enter through windows.

What to Consider. Most police departments and even burglar and fire alarm associations recommend that you should shop around before deciding on a company to install your burglar alarm.

Your use of the burglar alarm should be second nature, like locking your doors. The system should be easy for you to use. Look for simplicity over complicated features. After all, a feature filled alarm system is no good if you find it is too hard to use.

Consider having a fire alarm installed along with your burglar alarm. Also, consider special situations such as pets.

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SHERIFF'S OFFICE CRIME PREVENTION WEB PAGE:

http://sheriff.snoco.org/Sheriff_Services/Crime_Prevention.htm

NEWSLETTER INFO

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If you have questions regarding this newsletter or any articles that appear in it, please contact the editor at neighborhoodwatch@snoco.org

"PARTNERS IN CRIME PREVENTION NEWSLETTER" ARCHIVES:

http://sheriff.snoco.org/Sheriff_Services/CrimePrevention/CommunityPolicingNewsletter.htm

TIP LINES



Snohomish County Sheriff's Office: 425-388-3845

<http://www.snoco.org/app/ssh/anonymoustips/>

Crime Stoppers of Puget Sound: 1-800-222-8477